

**Security Council**

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The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions and statements of its President concerning Sudan,

Reaffirming its commitment to the cause of peace throughout Sudan, to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Sudan, and to the full and timely implementation of resolution 1591 (2005), *recalling* the importance of the principles of good neighbourliness, non-interference and cooperation in the relations among States in the region, and *further recalling* that the Government of Sudan bears the primary responsibility for protecting all populations within its territory, with respect for the rule of law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law,

Noting the importance of the work of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), the aims of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), and the stated commitment of the Government of Sudan to an inclusive national dialogue building on the AUHIP's ongoing peace efforts, *welcoming* the African Union Peace and Security Council's decision to extend the AUHIP's mandate for another year, and *further welcoming* the AU Roadmap Agreement, signed by both the Government and the opposition, and *urging* the signatory groups to implement the Roadmap by working towards a negotiated cessation of hostilities and an open and inclusive political dialogue,

Reiterating the need for an end to the violence and continued violations and abuses in Darfur, *underscoring* the importance of fully addressing the root causes of the conflict in the search for a sustainable peace, and recognizing that the Darfur conflict cannot be resolved militarily and a durable solution can only be obtained through an inclusive political process,

Noting that the conflict between the Government and armed groups has mostly become limited to the Jebel Marra region and *acknowledging* an overall reduction in violence, while remaining particularly concerned at the violence and insecurity that remains, including intercommunal violence, militia activity, banditry, and fighting between the government and armed groups, *expressing concern* that such violence and insecurity continues to negatively affect civilians and has contributed to an increase in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) observed in 2016, and that the Government of Sudan continues to restrict humanitarian access to conflict



areas where vulnerable civilian populations reside, and urging the Government of Sudan to work with international partners to address the urgent humanitarian crisis faced by the people of Darfur, including by improving the facilitation of timely and unhindered humanitarian access to all areas by humanitarian agencies and personnel, consistent with the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, including humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, and the relevant provisions of international law,

Emphasizing the imperative for all armed actors to refrain from all acts of violence against civilians, in particular members of vulnerable groups such as women and children, and to end all violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, and *further emphasizing* that some of these acts may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity under international law,

Expressing concern about the external links, in particular military, between non-signatory armed groups in Darfur and groups outside Darfur, *demanding* that direct or indirect military support for such armed groups in Darfur ceases, and *condemning* actions by any armed group aimed at forced overthrow of the Government of Sudan, noting there is no military solution to the conflict in Sudan,

Demanding that the parties to the conflict exercise restraint and cease military action of all kind, including aerial bombardments,

Welcoming the unilateral cessation of hostilities declarations by the parties, *urging* continued implementation of the cessation of hostilities declarations, and encouraging the parties to promptly reach a permanent cessation of hostilities,

Urging all armed groups engaged in conflict in the Jebel Marra area, including the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) to join the AU-led peace negotiations, as a first step towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement, and *recalling* its willingness to consider targeted sanctions against individuals or entities who impede the peace process, constitute a threat to stability in Darfur and the region, commit violations of international humanitarian or human rights law or other atrocities, or violate the measures implemented by Member States in accordance with relevant resolutions,

Recalling its resolution 2117 (2013) and the report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/289), and *expressing concern* at the threat to peace and security in Darfur arising from the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and the use of such weapons against civilians affected by armed conflict, and the continued threats to civilians posed by unexploded ordnance,

Deploing the continued violations of resolution 1591 (2005) by the Government of Sudan, including its Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and government-affiliated armed groups, involving the routine movement of weapons and ammunition into Darfur, without prior authorization of the 1591 committee, established pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution 1591 (the Committee),

Demanding an immediate and complete cessation by all parties to the armed conflict of all deliberate and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, acts of sexual violence against civilians, the recruitment and use of children in violation of applicable international law, and other violations and abuses against children, and

indiscriminate attacks on civilians, in line with all relevant resolutions on these issues, and *emphasizing* that those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights must be held accountable,

Welcoming the signing of an action plan in March 2016 between the United Nations and the Government of Sudan, to prevent the recruitment and use of children by Sudan Government Security Forces, *urging* continued progress on its implementation, and *urging* the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)-Gibril forces to refrain from the recruitment and use of children in violation of applicable international law,

Reaffirming its concern over the negative effect of violence in Darfur on the stability of Sudan as a whole, as well as the region, *welcoming* the ongoing good relations between Sudan and Chad, and *encouraging* Sudan and the countries of the region to continue to cooperate in order to achieve peace and stability in Darfur and the wider region,

Deploing the violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses committed by Government of Sudan security forces, their proxies, and armed groups, including those opposing the Government of Sudan, against civilians, including IDPs, particularly in the Jebel Marra area,

Stressing the need for improved cooperation between the Government of Sudan and the Panel of Experts, originally appointed pursuant to paragraph 3 of 1591 (2005) (the Panel of Experts), during the course of its mandate, *reiterating* its call on all parties in Darfur to cooperate fully with its mission, including by ensuring its free movement in, and access to, the region, notably to areas of armed conflict and areas of reported violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, *expressing continued concern* at all the continued obstacles and impediments imposed by the Government of Sudan on the work of the Panel of Experts,

Recalling the report (S/2017/22) by the Panel of Experts, and *expressing* its intent to further study, through the Committee, the Panel's recommendations and to consider appropriate next steps,

Emphasizing the need to respect the provisions of the United Nations Charter concerning privileges and immunities, and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, as applicable to United Nations operations and persons engaged in such operations,

Noting the critical importance of effective implementation of the sanctions regime, including the key role that neighbouring states, as well as regional and subregional organizations, can play in this regard, and *encouraging* efforts to further enhance cooperation,

Reminding all States, particularly States in the region, including the Government of Sudan, of the obligations contained in resolutions 1556 (2004), 1591 (2005), and 1945 (2010), in particular those obligations relating to arms and related materiel,

Calling on the Government of Sudan to fulfil all its commitments, including lifting the state of emergency in Darfur, allowing free expression and undertaking

effective efforts to ensure accountability for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, by whomsoever perpetrated,

Noting that acts of hostility, violence or intimidation against the civilian population, including IDPs, in Darfur, endanger or undermine the parties' commitment to a complete and durable cessation of hostilities, and would be inconsistent with the aims of the DDPD,

Determining that the situation in Sudan continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Decides* to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts, originally appointed pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) and previously extended by resolutions 1651 (2005), 1665 (2006), 1713 (2006), 1779 (2007), 1841 (2008), and 1891 (2009), 1945 (2010), 1982 (2011), 2035 (2012), 2091 (2013), 2138 (2014), 2200 (2015) and 2265 (2016) until 12 March 2018, *expresses its intent* to review the mandate and take appropriate action regarding further extension no later than 12 February 2018, and *requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary administrative measures, including basing arrangements, as expeditiously as possible;

2. *Requests* the Panel of Experts to provide to the Committee a first report on its activities no later than 12 August 2017, and, after discussion with the Committee, a final report to the Council no later than 12 January 2018 with its findings and recommendations;

3. *Requests* the Panel of Experts to provide updates every three months to the Committee regarding its activities, including Panel travel, and *requests* that any obstacles encountered to the fulfilment of its mandate, as well as violations of any part of the sanctions regime, be reported immediately;

4. *Requests* the Panel of Experts to report, in the timeframe identified in paragraph 3 of this resolution, on the implementation and effectiveness of paragraph 10 of resolution 1945 (2010);

5. *Expresses concern* that the Panel of Experts was not able to access Darfur since the adoption of resolution 2265 (2016), *underscores* the need for the Panel to have full and unfettered access to all of Darfur to fulfil its mandate, throughout the length of its mandate, *insists* that the Government of Sudan remove all restrictions, limitations and bureaucratic impediments imposed on the work of the Panel of Experts, including by issuing timely multiple-entry visas to all members of the Panel of Experts for the duration of its mandate, and by waiving the requirement of Darfur travel permits for said Panel members and enhance its cooperation and information sharing with the Panel, and *stresses* that it will monitor the degree of cooperation of the Government of Sudan on such matters;

6. *Reiterates* its support for the efforts of the United Nations/African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Secretary-General, AUHIP, the Joint Special Representative, and the leaders of the region to promote peace and stability in Darfur;

7. *Urges* the non-signatory groups to sign the AU Roadmap urgently as an important milestone in determining a practicable way forward towards a cessation of hostilities and an inclusive political dialogue;

Arms Embargo

8. *Expresses its concern* that the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to Sudan of technical assistance and support, including training, financial or other assistance and the provision of spare parts, weapons systems and related materiel, could be used by the Government of Sudan to support military aircraft being used in violation of resolutions 1556 (2004) and 1591 (2005), including those aircraft identified by the panel, and *urges* all States to be mindful of this risk in light of the measures contained in resolution 1591 (2005);

9. *Recalls* the Government of Sudan's obligations under resolution 1591 (2005), including the requirement to request advance approval from the Committee for the movement of military equipment and supplies into the Darfur region;

10. *Calls upon* the Government of Sudan to address the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation, and misuse of small arms and light weapons in Darfur, which also contributes to instability in the region, and further to ensure the safe and effective management, storage and security of their stockpiles of small arms and light weapons, and the collection and/or destruction of surplus, seized, unmarked, or illicitly held weapons and ammunition, and *calls upon* the Government of Sudan and other signatories to swiftly fulfil their commitments under the DDPD to implement and complete disarmament, demobilization and reintegration;

11. *Expresses* its concern that certain items continue to be converted for military purposes and transferred to Darfur, and *urges* all States to be mindful of this risk in light of the measures contained in resolution 1591 (2005);

Implementation

12. *Condemns* the continued violations of the measures contained in paragraphs 7 and 8 of resolution 1556 (2004) and paragraph 7 of resolution 1591 (2005), as updated in paragraph 9 of resolution 1945 (2010) and 4 of resolution 2035 (2012) and *directs* the Committee, in line with its mandate and guidelines, to consult as soon as possible with any Member State about which the Committee deems there is credible information that provides reasonable grounds to believe the State is facilitating such violations or any other acts of non-compliance with these measures;

13. *Expresses its concern* that the travel ban and asset freeze on designated individuals is not being implemented by all Member States, requests the Panel to share with the Committee any information regarding possible non-compliance with the travel ban and asset freeze as soon as possible, and *directs* the Committee to respond effectively to any reports of non-compliance by Member States with paragraph 3 of resolution 1591 (2005) and resolution 1672 (2006), including by engaging immediately with all relevant parties;

14. *Reiterates* that all States, particularly those in the region, shall take the necessary measures to prevent entry into or transit through their territories of all persons as designated by the Committee, in accordance with paragraph 3 of

resolution 1591 (2005), and *calls upon* the Government of Sudan to enhance cooperation and information sharing with other States in this regard;

15. *Urges* all States, in particular those in the region, to report to the Committee on the actions they have taken to implement measures imposed by resolutions 1591 (2005) and 1556 (2004), including imposition of targeted measures;

16. *Expresses its intention*, following the first report, to review the state of implementation, including obstacles to full and effective implementation of the measures, imposed in resolutions 1591 (2005) and 1945 (2010), with a view to ensuring full compliance;

17. *Regrets* that some individuals of the Government of Sudan and armed groups in Darfur continue to commit violence against civilians, impede the peace process, and disregard the demands of the Council, *expresses its intention* to impose targeted sanctions against individuals and entities that meet the listing criteria of paragraph 3 (c) of resolution 1591 (2005), and *encourages* the Panel of Experts, in coordination with the Joint African Union/United Nations Mediation, to provide to the Committee when appropriate the names of any individuals, groups, or entities that may meet the listing criteria;

18. *Deplores* the attacks against UNAMID while acknowledging that such attacks have been less frequent in 2016, and *calls upon* the Government of Sudan to swiftly investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice, taking into account the findings of the 2014, 2015 and 2016 final reports of the Panel of Experts, and the Secretary-General's report of 23 December 2016 (S/2016/1109), and *reaffirms* its deep condolences to the Governments and families of those killed;

19. *Condemns* the use of civilian establishments, in particular the camps for IDPs, by the armed groups, including those opposing the Government of Sudan, to gain a military advantage in a manner that places civilians and civilian objects at risk from the dangers arising from armed conflict;

20. *Requests* the Panel of Experts to continue to investigate the financing and role of armed, military, and political groups in attacks against civilians and UNAMID personnel in Darfur;

21. *Recalls* that individuals and entities who plan, sponsor or participate in such attacks constitute a threat to stability in Darfur and may therefore meet the designation criteria provided for in paragraphs 3 (c) of resolution 1591 (2005), and *expresses its intention* to impose targeted sanctions on individuals and entities who plan, sponsor or participate in such attacks;

22. *Requests* the Panel of Experts to investigate any means of the financing of armed groups in Darfur;

Cooperation

23. *Urges* the Government of Sudan to respond to the Committee requests on measures put in place to protect civilians in all of Darfur, particularly in Jebel Marra, including those affected by new displacements; investigations conducted and accountability measures undertaken for unlawful killings of civilians and other human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law,

including investigations conducted and accountability measures undertaken for attacks against peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel; and the situation of civilian populations in areas across Darfur and in particular the Jebel Marra region affected by the humanitarian crisis, where the Panel of Experts, UNAMID and humanitarian agencies and personnel have been denied access, and measures taken to allow timely, safe, and unhindered access for humanitarian relief to these areas, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, and the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, including humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;

24. *Welcomes* the Committee's work, which has drawn on the reports of the Panel and taken advantage of the work done in other fora, and *urges* all States, relevant United Nations bodies, the African Union and other interested parties, to cooperate fully with the Committee and the Panel of Experts, in particular by supplying any information at their disposal on implementation of the measures imposed by resolution 1591 (2005), resolution 1556 (2004), and resolution 1945 (2010) and to provide timely responses to information requests;

25. *Requests* the Panel of Experts to continue to coordinate its activities as appropriate with the operations of UNAMID, with international efforts to promote a political process in Darfur, and with other Panels or Groups of Experts, established by the Security Council, as relevant to the implementation of its mandate;

26. *Requests* the Panel of Experts to assess in its first and final reports progress towards reducing violations by all parties of the measures imposed by paragraphs 7 and 8 of resolution 1556 (2005), paragraph 7 of resolution 1591 (2005), and paragraph 10 of resolution 1945 (2010), and progress towards removing impediments to the political process, threats to stability in Darfur and the region; violations of international humanitarian law or violations or abuses of human rights, including those that involve attacks on the civilian population, sexual- and gender-based violence, violations and abuses against children, and other violations of the above-mentioned resolutions, and to provide the Committee with information on the individuals and entities that meet the listing criteria in paragraph 3 (c) of resolution 1591;

Sanctions Committee

27. *Reaffirms* the mandate of the Committee to encourage dialogue with interested Member States, in particular those in the region, including by inviting representatives of such States to meet with the Committee to discuss implementation of the measures and *further encourages* the Committee to continue its dialogue with UNAMID;

28. *Emphasizes* the importance of holding regular consultations with concerned Member States, as may be necessary, in order to ensure full implementation of the measures set forth in this resolution;

29. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

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General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda items 32 and 37Security Council
Seventy-second year**Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their
implications for international peace, security
and development****The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan****Letter dated 6 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative
of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

The continuing aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan has led to the temporary occupation of a significant part of Azerbaijan's territory, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the seven adjacent districts and some exclaves. The war has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people, ruined cities and livelihoods in my country and resulted in the forcible expulsion of more than 1 million Azerbaijanis from their homes and properties.

Serious violations of international humanitarian law amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide were committed by the Armenian side in the course of the aggression. Such violations include, inter alia, indiscriminate attacks, the killing of civilians, the taking and holding of hostages, the mistreatment and summary execution of prisoners of war and hostages, sexual violence, the extensive destruction of inhabited areas and public and private property, pillaging and forced displacement.

This month marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the atrocious crime committed against the civilians and defenders of the town of Khojaly, in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. What happened in Khojaly in February 1992 was the largest massacre in the conflict.

Before the war, 7,000 people lived in that town. From October 1991, the town was entirely surrounded by the Armenian forces and their affiliates. In the night of 25 to 26 February 1992, following massive artillery bombardments, the assault on the town began from various directions. As a result of the attack and capture of the town, hundreds of Azerbaijanis, including women, children and the elderly, were killed, wounded or taken hostage, while the town was razed to the ground.



The following year, the Security Council adopted four resolutions on the conflict¹ condemning the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and reaffirming respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory. In response to Armenia's territorial claims and actions, the Council reconfirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an integral part of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories. A series of Security Council presidential statements adopted between 1992 and 1995 and documents of other international organizations are couched in the same terms.

In its resolutions and presidential statements, the Security Council further expressed grave concern about "the displacement of a large number of civilians in Azerbaijan and the serious humanitarian emergency in the region", condemned the "attacks on civilians and bombardments of the territory of the Azerbaijani Republic" and reaffirmed that the parties "are bound to comply with the principles and rules of international humanitarian law".

Other international organizations also strongly deplored the Armenian side for the use of military force and affirmed its direct responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the course of the war.

Thus, having considered the impact of the conflict on the civilian population in the area of combat operation, particularly the massacre in the town of Khojaly in February 1992, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in a declaration of 11 March 1992 expressed deep concern "about recent reports of indiscriminate killings and outrages", firmly condemned "the violence and attacks directed against the civilian populations in the Nagorno-Karabakh area of the Azerbaijan Republic" and underlined that "no solution imposed by force can be accepted by the international community".²

In 1993, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margaretha af Ugglas, in her capacity as Chairperson of the Council of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), underlined that acquisition of territory by force can never be condoned or accepted as a basis for territorial claims³ and expressed grave concern at the unacceptable scorched-earth policy practiced by the Armenian armed forces.⁴

In its resolution 1416 (2005) of 25 January 2005, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe noted particularly that "considerable parts of the territory of Azerbaijan are still occupied by Armenian forces" and that "the military action, and the widespread ethnic hostilities which preceded it, led to large-scale ethnic expulsion and the creation of mono-ethnic areas which resemble the terrible concept of ethnic cleansing".

¹ Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993).

² Declaration adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 March 1992 at the 471bis meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

³ Council of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Communication No. 284, Prague, 26 October 1993.

⁴ Council of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Communication No. 301, Prague, 19 November 1993.

Referring to the reports of independent sources, the European Court of Human Rights pointed out that "at the time of the capture of Khojaly on the night of 25 to 26 February 1992 hundreds of civilians of Azerbaijani ethnic origin were reportedly killed, wounded or taken hostage, during their attempt to flee the captured town, by Armenian fighters attacking the town". The Court qualified atrocities committed in Khojaly as "acts of particular gravity which may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity".⁵

There are abundant sources, consisting of the testimonies of witnesses to the tragedy, statements by authoritative international institutions and the findings of independent investigations by foreign journalists, human rights activists and authoritative international non-governmental organizations, which also contribute to corroborating the facts on the ground.⁶

Thus, based on the results of their inquiries, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki and the Memorial Human Rights Centre placed direct responsibility for the civilian deaths with the Armenian forces. In her letter dated 24 March 1997 addressed to the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch/Helsinki responded as follows to attempts by the Armenian propaganda to obfuscate this human rights organization with fabrications:

Our research and that of the Memorial Human Rights Centre found that the retreating militia fled Khojaly along with some of the large groups of fleeing civilians. Our report noted that by remaining armed and in uniform, the Azerbaijani militia may be considered as combatants and thus endangered fleeing civilians, even if their intent had been to protect them. *Yet we place direct responsibility for the civilian deaths with Karabakh Armenian forces. Indeed, neither our report nor that of [the Centre] includes any evidence to support the argument that Azerbaijani forces obstructed the flight of, or fired on Azeri civilians.*⁷

Referring to a report by a Reuters correspondent in Aghdam, Azerbaijan, *The Independent* reported that "after a massacre, Azeris were burying scores of people who died when Armenians overran the town of Khojaly, the second-biggest Azeri settlement in the area. 'The world is turning its back on what's happening here. We are dying and you are just watching', one mourner shouted at a group of journalists".⁸

The Australian newspaper, *The Age*, reported that "the exact number of victims is still unclear, but there can be little doubt that Azeri civilians were massacred by the Armenian Army in the snowy mountains of Nagorno-Karabakh last week".⁹

Pascal Privat and Steve Le Vine of *Newsweek*, in their article entitled "The face of a massacre" reported as follows:

⁵ Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights, 22 April 2010, para. 87.

⁶ For more information, see <http://www.justiceforkhojaly.org/>.

⁷ Emphasis added. The full text of the letter is available from <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/english/docs/1997/03/24/azerba16933.htm>.

⁸ *The Independent*, 29 February 1992.

⁹ *The Age*, 6 March 1992.

Azerbaijan was a charnel house again last week: a place of mourning refugees and dozens of mangled corpses dragged to a makeshift morgue behind the mosque. They were ordinary Azerbaijani men, women and children of Khojaly, a small village in war-torn Nagorno-Karabakh overrun by Armenian forces on 25-26 February. Many were killed at close range while trying to flee; some had their faces mutilated, others were scalped.¹⁰

Jill Smolowe of *Time* magazine in her article "Massacre in Khojaly" reported as follows:

While the details are argued, this much is plain: something grim and unconscionable happened in the Azerbaijani town of Khojaly two weeks ago. So far, some 200 dead Azerbaijanis, many of them mutilated, have been transported out of the town tucked inside the Armenian-dominated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh for burial in neighbouring Azerbaijan. The total number of deaths — the Azerbaijanis claim 1,324 civilians have been slaughtered, most of them women and children — is unknown.¹¹

Furthermore, public statements by Armenian officials and the leaders of the subordinate separatist regime, as well as by other witnesses, are undoubtedly regarded as admission of liability. As the International Court of Justice made it clear, "statements of this kind, emanating from high-ranking official political figures, sometimes indeed of the highest rank, are of particular probative value when they acknowledge facts or conduct unfavorable to the State represented by the person who made them. They may then be construed as a form of admission".¹²

It should be particularly noted that Khojaly was seized when the incumbent President Serzh Sargsyan of the Republic of Armenia served as head of the separatist regime's "self-defence forces committee" and, accordingly, his recollections constitute one of the most important sources of evidence. The following words by Mr. Sargsyan, at an interview when he was Armenia's Minister of Defense, leave no doubts as to the question of the perpetrator of the crime in Khojaly:

Before Khojali, the Azerbaijanis thought that they were joking with us, they thought that the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. We were able to break that [stereotype]. And that's what happened. And we should also take into account that amongst those boys were people who had fled from Baku and Sumgayit.¹³

Further, Mr. Sargsyan debunked the myth about the corridor allegedly left open by the assailants for the civilian population of Khojaly. Thus, answering the question on this issue, he readily concedes that "generally speaking, this was after Khojaly", since at the time "there was a certain amount of ethnic cleansing", as "it's impossible to do this any other way".

¹⁰ *Newsweek*, 16 March 1992.

¹¹ *Time*, 16 March 1992.

¹² See *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of America)*, Merits, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1986.

¹³ See Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War* (New York and London, 2004).

Finally, in answer to the question as to whether he had any regrets about the deaths of thousands of people, Mr. Sargsyan said: "I have absolutely no regrets", since "such upheavals are necessary, even if thousands have to die".

These words from a person holding the highest political and military post in Armenia speak for themselves and disprove any denial of responsibility for the crimes committed in Khojaly and elsewhere in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

In his article, Jirair Libaridian, who was chief advisor to the first President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrossian, at the time of the Khojaly massacre, admitted that "it is very difficult for an Armenian to write about Khojali" because "something unacceptable did happen, something that involved killings and mutilation of Azeri civilians by Armenian forces in Karabakh".¹⁴

According to another Armenian author, Markar Melkonian, in his book dedicated to his brother, Monte Melkonian, who personally took part in the assault on Khojaly, the town "had been a strategic goal, but it had also been an act of revenge".¹⁵ Melkonian particularly mentions the role of the fighters of the two Armenian military detachments "Arabo" and "Aramo" and describes in detail how they butchered the peaceful inhabitants of Khojaly. Thus, as he puts it, some inhabitants of the town had almost made it to safety, after fleeing for nearly six miles, when "[Armenian] soldiers had chased them down". The soldiers, in his words, "unsheathed the knives they had carried on their hips for so long, and began stabbing".¹⁵

The overall assessment of the causes and consequences of the war and all existing facts of mass killings in Khojaly make it absolutely clear that the crimes committed in that town were not an isolated or sporadic act, but part of Armenia's widespread and systematic policy and practice of carrying out atrocities.

The official investigation conducted in Azerbaijan found that the specific elements of the crime of genocide, as defined under international law, were present with regard to the attacks on civilians in Khojaly and that the necessary requirements had been met for the purpose of sustaining the genocide charges to that end.

The impunity still enjoyed by the perpetrators of the crimes committed in the course of the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan not only impedes progress in achieving the long-awaited peace and reconciliation between the two countries, but also aggravates the already difficult situation in the peace process and contributes to Armenia's growing sense of permissiveness. The examples below are illustrative in that regard.

First, in total disregard of the demands of the Security Council and in flagrant violation of international law, Armenia makes purposeful efforts towards consolidating the current status quo of the occupation, strengthening its military build-up in the seized territories, changing their demographic, cultural and physical

¹⁴ Jirair Libaridian, "An Armenian Perspective on Khojali", 19 February 2014.

¹⁵ See Markar Malkonian, *My Brother's Road: An American's Fateful Journey to Armenia* (London and New York, I. B. Tauris, 2005).

character and preventing the hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis from returning to their homes and properties in those areas.¹⁶

Second, regular ceasefire violations and attacks on the towns and villages in Azerbaijan situated along the line of contact of the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the border between the two States, have become more frequent and violent in recent times, resulting in the killing and injuring of Azerbaijani civilians residing near those areas.

Thus, starting in the early morning of 2 April 2016, the armed forces of Armenia increased fighting from their positions in the occupied territories, subjecting the armed forces of Azerbaijan along the line of contact and the adjacent densely populated areas under the control of Azerbaijan to intensive fire with heavy artillery and large-calibre weapons. As a result of Armenia's attacks and subsequent hostilities, 34 towns and villages in Azerbaijan were shelled, causing casualties among civilians and the servicemen of the armed forces of Azerbaijan as well as destroying or substantially damaging private and public property, including residences, schools and kindergartens.

On 10 April 2016, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) facilitated the handover, by both sides, of the bodies of those killed in action following the recent escalation.¹⁷ The forensic medical examinations performed subsequently registered numerous signs of post-mortem mutilation of the bodies of Azerbaijani servicemen.¹⁸

In May 2016, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees conducted a mission to the affected areas in Azerbaijan. In its assessment report,¹⁹ the Mission pointed out the following:

Azerbaijani villages living along the [line of contact] have been coping with the regular violations of the ceasefire for the last 20 years. *Since the beginning of April 2016, however, the situation on the [line of contact] has changed fundamentally* due to the use of new and heavier types of military hardware inflicting worse damage and reaching further behind the frontlines.

The Mission also found that the intense fighting that flared up again on 27 to 28 April had had an even worse impact on settlements, particularly for the civilians living in the Goranboy, Tartar, Aghdam and Aghjebedi districts of Azerbaijan. The Mission further noted that "many of the civilians on [the line of contact] lost their livestock to the bombardments and their fields are now contaminated with [unexploded ordnance]" and that "many schools are damaged and closed in the area near the frontline in Goranboy, Tartar, Aghdam and Aghjebedi".

¹⁶ For more information, see A/70/1016-S/2016/711.

¹⁷ See <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/nagorno-karabakh-icrc-facilitates-retrieval-and-transfer-those-killed-action>.

¹⁸ For more information, see A/70/838-S/2016/363 and A/70/842-S/2016/370.

¹⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Azerbaijan, assessment mission report entitled "Populations affected by the violence on the line of contact in April 2016", 15 May 2016.

Third, since the beginning of the conflict, Armenia has extensively practiced the taking and holding of hostages and mistreatment and summary execution of prisoners of war and other captives.

Thus, at the beginning of January 2017, 3,867 citizens of Azerbaijan were registered as missing as a result of the conflict, including 3,123 servicemen and 744 civilians. Among the civilians, 62 are children (20 girls and 42 boys), 261 are women and 301 are elderly persons (including 152 women). It has been established that 873 of the 3,867 missing persons were either taken as prisoners of war or hostages, including 591 servicemen and 282 civilians, of whom 29 are children (7 girls and 22 boys), 99 are women and 112 are elderly persons (including 63 women).²⁰

A clear list of the missing citizens of Azerbaijan has been submitted to Armenia through ICRC and is being regularly updated. However, Armenia has failed to account either properly or at all for the missing persons within its control and to conduct a prompt and effective investigation into the arguable claims that such persons have been taken into its custody and have not been seen since.

On 11 July 2014, the Armenian armed forces killed an Azerbaijani civilian, Hassan Hassanov, and captured two others, Dilgam Askarov and Shahbaz Guliyev, who were attempting to visit the graves of their relatives in the Kelbajar district of Azerbaijan. The Armenian side not only did not release these civilians, but also fabricated charges against them and unlawfully sentenced Mr. Askarov to life imprisonment and Mr. Guliyev to 22 years in jail, while the body of Mr. Hassanov was returned to Azerbaijan, with the facilitation of ICRC, after almost three months, on 2 October 2014.²¹

That was not the only instance of the Armenian side delaying the return of human remains and even trying to speculate and blackmail on such a sensitive issue. On 29 December 2016, Chingiz Gurbanov, a servicemen of the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was killed in the fighting to halt an attempted incursion by an Armenian subversive group on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. Immediately after the incident, ICRC offered its services, in its role as neutral intermediary, to facilitate the transfer of the soldier's body. Despite that and the insistent appeals of the international community, including the specific emphasis in their respective statements on the humanitarian nature of the issue,²² the body was returned from Armenia to Azerbaijan only on the fortieth day, on 5 February 2017.

In conclusion, it is essential to state once again that the unlawful presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is the main cause of tensions and incidents that lead to human losses and sufferings in the conflict zone and the major impediment to the political settlement of the conflict.

²⁰ See the website of the State Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons, (<http://www.human.gov.az/en/view-page/27/%C6%8F%C4%B0R,%20G%C4%B0ROV%20V%C6%8F%20%C4%B0TK%C4%B0N%20D%C3%9C%C5%9EM%C3%9C%C5%9EL%C6%8FR#.WJSZ01UrKuk>).

²¹ See the statement by Azerbaijan at the 7374th meeting of the Security Council, on 30 January 2015 (S/PV.7374).

²² See, for example, the statements by the Co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group of 9 January 2017 and by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe of 11 January 2017.

The only way to achieve a durable and lasting solution is to ensure the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and from other occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

At the same time, the establishment of truth with respect to gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during the conflict, the provision of adequate and effective reparations to victims and the need for institutional actions to prevent the repetition of such violations are among the necessary prerequisites for sustainable peace and long-term stability. It is therefore important that peace efforts, including those being undertaken towards the resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, never encourage, accept or tolerate the situations achieved by the unlawful use of force and other egregious violations of international law, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and ethnic cleansing. The Republic of Azerbaijan will spare no effort towards achieving the political settlement of the conflict and ensuring peace and justice in the region.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 32 and 37, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar Aliyev
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

**Security Council**

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**Report of the Secretary-General on developments in
Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations
Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau****I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2267 (2016), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) until 28 February 2017 and requested me to report every six months on the situation in Guinea-Bissau and on progress made in the implementation of the resolution and the mandate of UNIOGBIS. The report also provides an update on key political, security, human rights, socioeconomic and humanitarian developments in Guinea-Bissau since my report of 2 August 2016 (S/2016/675).

II. Major developments**A. Political situation**

2. The political situation in Guinea-Bissau continued to be dominated by the protracted political impasse in the country and by regional and international efforts to find a sustainable solution. A high-level delegation from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), led by the President of Guinea, Alpha Condé, in his capacity as ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, visited Bissau on 10 September. He was accompanied by the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Liberia and Sierra Leone, Marjon Vashti Kamara and Samura M.W. Kamara, and the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Marcel de Souza. The delegation held consultations with national political stakeholders, including the President, José Mário Vaz, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Cipriano Cassamá, the Prime Minister, Baciro Dja, representatives of the five parties with parliamentary seats and the group of 15 parliamentarians who had been expelled from the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC).

3. My Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and Head of UNIOGBIS, Modibo Ibrahim Touré, and the Special Representative and Head of the African Union Liaison Office in Guinea-Bissau, Ovidio Pequeno, participated in the



ECOWAS-led consultations as observers on behalf of the Guinea-Bissau-based group of international partners composed of the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS, the European Union and the United Nations.

4. The ECOWAS consultations resulted in the signing, on 10 September, of a six-point road map to end the political crisis. The signatories included the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister and the leaders of the two main parties represented in the National Assembly, PAIGC and the Party for Social Renewal (PRS). The six points outlined in the road map are the holding of an inclusive national round-table dialogue; the formation of an inclusive Government to implement key reforms before legislative elections in 2018; the establishment of an ECOWAS monitoring and follow-up mechanism; the implementation of reforms in the defence and security sectors; and the "progressive demobilization" of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) within six months of the formation of a national contingent to take over its mandate of protecting State institutions.

5. In a resolution adopted by its Central Committee on 16 September, PAIGC clarified that it accepted the notion of an inclusive Government, provided that its "right to govern", stemming from its victory in the legislative elections of 2014, was acknowledged. On the same day, the National Political Commission of PRS also announced its agreement to continue negotiations towards an inclusive political dialogue under the auspices of ECOWAS and in line with the road map.

6. From 10 to 14 October, the ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau convened consultations with national stakeholders in Conakry, focused specifically on the implementation of the first two elements of the road map: the holding of an inclusive national round-table dialogue and the formation of an inclusive Government. Representatives of the Government, State institutions, political parties represented in the National Assembly, the 15 parliamentarians expelled from PAIGC and civil society participated. The President of the ECOWAS Commission, my Special Representative and envoys from Angola, Senegal, Sierra Leone and the African Union also attended. On 14 October, the political stakeholders signed the Conakry Agreement, which provides for the appointment of a consensus Prime Minister who would have "the confidence" of the President; the formation of an inclusive Government to implement a programme of reforms stemming from a national round-table dialogue, to be held within 30 days of the appointment of the Prime Minister; the development and adoption of a stability pact; and the unconditional reintegration of the 15 parliamentarians expelled from PAIGC into the party, in accordance with the party's rules.

7. Following their return to Guinea-Bissau, differences emerged among political stakeholders as to the agreement reached in Conakry with regard to the appointment of the Prime Minister. On the one hand, PAIGC, the Democratic Convergence Party (PCD) and the Union for Change (UM) claimed that agreement had been reached on a name from the list of three candidates proposed by the President to the ECOWAS Mediator before the consultations. On the other hand, PRS and the New Democracy Party argued that, while the three names had been considered in Conakry, no definitive agreement had been reached. From 24 to 27 October, the President embarked on a fresh round of consultations with representatives of political parties, civil society and religious organizations to obtain their views on who should be the

new Prime Minister. In parallel, he also briefed representatives of the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union and the United Nations on the outcome of the consultations.

8. On 5 November, the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, in her capacity as Chairperson of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, visited Guinea-Bissau to consult the President, the Speaker and the Prime Minister, representatives of PAIGC and PRS and the 15 parliamentarians expelled from PAIGC. All stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to the Conakry Agreement. In a final communiqué issued following her visit, co-signed by the Presidents of Liberia and Guinea-Bissau and the President of the ECOWAS Commission, it was agreed that the reintegration of the expelled parliamentarians into PAIGC should be accelerated and that the President of Guinea-Bissau should appoint, without further delay, a consensual Prime Minister who would "have his confidence".

9. On 15 November, following further consultations with all political parties represented in the National Assembly, the President dismissed the Government on the basis that it had been unable to obtain the approval of the Assembly for its programme of work and the national budget. On 18 November, he appointed Umaro Sissoco Embaló, one of the three names that he had proposed to the ECOWAS Mediator before the talks in Conakry, as Prime Minister. In the appointment decree, he referred to the Conakry Agreement and noted that the nomination had followed all constitutional formalities. The reactions of national stakeholders to the appointment were in accordance with the positions that they had taken following the signing of the Agreement. On 18 and 19 November, respectively, PAIGC contended that the President had repudiated the Agreement through the appointment, while UM denounced the appointment as a violation of the Agreement. On 19 November, PRS announced that it agreed with the appointment and would consider participating in the future Government if invited to do so.

10. Upon assuming office, the Prime Minister initiated consultations with all signatories to the Conakry Agreement with a view to forming an inclusive Government. In addition to national stakeholders, he held meetings with the President of Senegal, Macky Sall, in Dakar on 19 November, the President of Liberia in Monrovia on 28 November and international partner organizations in Bissau on 29 November. On 26 November, PAIGC reiterated its determination not to allow its members to participate in the new Government and announced the withdrawal of its confidence in the President. In a statement issued on 27 November, the 15 expelled parliamentarians condemned the stance of PAIGC, expressed full confidence in the new Prime Minister and urged him to expedite the formation of an inclusive Government. On 12 December, the President appointed by decree the members of the Government. Of the five parties represented in the National Assembly, PRS alone joined the new Government, which was inaugurated on the following day.

11. On 17 December, in a final communiqué issued following its fiftieth ordinary session, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government reaffirmed its deep concern over the protracted political and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau and that the Conakry Agreement remained the only framework for its peaceful resolution. The Authority urged the President, who attended the meeting, to comply

with the provisions of the Agreement and called upon all parties to strictly respect and comply with the tenets of the Agreement. The Authority also directed the ECOWAS Commission to withdraw ECOMIB by the end of its current mandate on 30 June 2017, beginning in the first quarter of 2017. It made no reference to the preconditions on which the withdrawal would be contingent as outlined in the ECOWAS road map of 10 September.

12. On 28 December, the leader of the United People's Assembly-Democratic Party of Guinea-Bissau, Nuno Nabiam, publicly alleged that the President was planning to change the Bureau of the National Assembly and depose the current Speaker in order to "force" the Assembly to adopt the new Government's programme of work. On 30 December, the Permanent Commission of the National Assembly met, at the request of PAIGC and without the participation of PRS representatives, to discuss, among other things, the allegations. Following the meeting, the Commission urged the President to revoke the decrees appointing the Prime Minister and his Government and to appoint Augusto Olivaes as the new consensus Prime Minister on the basis of his selection from the list of three candidates provided to the political parties in Conakry. They also called for the appointment of an inclusive and consensual Government, stating that those steps would facilitate the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Conakry Agreement, especially the holding of a round-table dialogue for the development of the Government's programme of work.

13. In a televised address to the nation on 31 December, the President acknowledged that 2016 had been a difficult year for Guinea-Bissau and called upon all citizens to unite around building the nation and reforming the Administration. He also expressed the need for the country to focus efforts on tackling youth unemployment, halting corruption and increasing rice production.

B. Security situation

14. The overall security situation remained calm, the tense political climate notwithstanding, with no major incidents reported. On 16 November, Armed Forces Day, the Chief of General Staff, General Biaguê Na N'Tan, reaffirmed the subordination of the military to the political authorities and the Constitution, noting that there would be zero tolerance of any political interference by military personnel.

C. Human rights situation

15. No gross human rights violations were reported, but limited capacities and financial constraints continued to impede the ability of the State authorities to discharge their functions in the area of human rights effectively.

16. On 14 November, following a protest march organized by civil society organizations, the Minister of Territorial Administration issued an order to prohibit, for an unspecified period, public demonstrations and rallies throughout the country, with the exception of those authorized by him.

17. The reopening of the sector court in Canchungo, Cacheu region, notwithstanding, access to justice nationwide remained poor, in particular for vulnerable groups and women. Corrections facilities also continued to suffer from overcrowding, insecurity and poor living conditions. On 16 October, as a result of overcrowding and inadequate perimeter security, 24 detainees escaped from the Judiciary Police detention centre in Bissau. Fourteen remain at large.

18. Limited progress was made in tackling serious human rights violations from the past through the existing formal justice system. The establishment of an international commission of inquiry, as recommended at the National Conference on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights held in July 2013, remains pending. Owing to the political situation, no progress was made in establishing transitional justice mechanisms or in convening the proposed national conference on reconciliation.

D. Social, economic and humanitarian situation

19. On 2 December, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to resume the disbursement of \$7 million in budgetary support to Guinea-Bissau given the progress made by the Government in reversing the contentious bank bailout of 2015 and taking measures to improve fiscal performance.

20. The political and institutional instability notwithstanding, Guinea-Bissau registered strong economic growth thanks to a record harvest and the sale of cashew nuts. In 2016, agricultural production grew by an estimated 8.3 per cent, with more than 190,000 tons of raw cashew being exported. Consequently, gross domestic product growth in 2016 was expected to surpass the 4.8 per cent forecast by IMF in 2015. Nevertheless, 30.6 per cent of the rural population remains food insecure, according to a survey carried out in September by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with the support of the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The figure represents an increase of 10.5 per cent compared with 2015.

21. There were several public sector strikes over salary arrears, primarily by employees of the ministries responsible for education, economic affairs and finance. Teaching unions also went on strike from 26 September to 21 November, affecting primary and secondary schools and hampering the distribution of 1.17 million textbooks by the United Nations Children's Fund. The Government has since made payments towards the arrears. Overall access to basic social services remained limited, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups, including women, children and persons with disabilities.

III. Status of implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

A. Inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation process

22. UNIOGBIS continued to encourage national stakeholders to seek solutions to the political crisis through dialogue. In this regard, my Special Representative regularly engaged with national stakeholders, including the President, the Speaker,

the Prime Minister, the President of the Supreme Court, the Chief of General Staff and political leaders. He also engaged with representatives of political parties, the 15 parliamentarians expelled from PAIGC, civil society, including youth and women's organizations, and traditional and religious leaders.

23. In support of the ECOWAS mediation efforts, my Special Representative visited the subregion, including Abidjan, Abuja, Conakry, Dakar, Freetown and Monrovia, and worked closely with the President of the ECOWAS Commission.

24. In coordination with the international partners of Guinea-Bissau, my Special Representative continued to provide leadership in forging a common understanding of the situation in the country and options for a political resolution of the crisis. In that regard, on 28 October, he convened a meeting of the international partner organizations represented in Bissau, including the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union and the United Nations, and representatives of the six parties that constitute the Forum of Democratic Parties for Political Consultation, including PAIGC, PCD and UM.

25. UNIOGBIS also continued to support the organizing commission for the national conference towards the consolidation of peace and development in Guinea-Bissau, in particular with technical expertise and financial support through the Peacebuilding Fund. The commission is preparing its report outlining recommendations on how the national conference could move forward in establishing permanent or semi-permanent conflict resolution and dialogue mechanisms to help to address the root causes of instability. From 11 to 20 August and from 18 to 24 September, members of the commission undertook study trips to Timor-Leste and Côte d'Ivoire, respectively, to learn from national dialogue and reconciliation processes in other contexts, with the technical and financial support of UNIOGBIS through the Fund. Between 9 September and 9 October, the commission organized a series of meetings in Bissau with focus groups, including young people, women, the military and security forces, the media and the judiciary, with the technical assistance of UNIOGBIS and the financial support of the Fund.

B. National security sector reform and rule of law strategies

26. UNIOGBIS, in cooperation with the African Union, ECOWAS and the European Union, assisted national stakeholders in reviewing the country's strategy for security sector reform, originally published in 2006.

27. As part of efforts to strengthen the justice sector, UNIOGBIS supported the Ministry of Justice in organizing the sixth high-level National Justice Forum, held from 6 to 8 December in Bissau. Some 70 representatives, including 10 women, of judicial institutions, law enforcement agencies and civil society developed recommendations concerning military justice, penitentiary reform and countering violent extremism and organized crime.

28. From 8 to 15 November, UNIOGBIS supported the organization of five seminars to strengthen the capacity and enhance the coordination of 189 members of the Quinara regional and sectoral consultative council, which was established in 2015 with the support of UNIOGBIS. Representatives of civil society, including 30 women, working in the fields of peacebuilding, rule of law, crime prevention,

environmental crimes and security governance also participated. The national authorities are considering the replication of the council in other regions.

29. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued to provide technical and financial support to the National Centre for Judicial Training. The Centre provided refresher training for magistrates, lawyers and police officers, including on environmental law, cross-border crime and trafficking in persons and drugs. Between 30 November and 8 December, with the financial support of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the United States of America and the technical support of the Centre, six judges and six prosecutors serving in criminal courts in border areas participated in joint training sessions in Brazil and Senegal with magistrates of countries facing similar challenges.

30. With the support of UNIOGBIS, the National Defence Institute organized a conference on maritime security, held from 23 to 25 November in Bissau and attended by participants from the navy, the air force and national maritime stakeholders. From 17 to 21 December, UNIOGBIS facilitated an inter-agency maritime assessment mission for the development of a national maritime strategy. On 15 December, also with the support of UNIOGBIS, the Institute held a conference on key issues and challenges in countering violent extremism and terrorism for 40 participants, including 6 women.

31. UNDP continued to support the Ministry of Justice in the provision of free legal assistance and mediation of minor conflicts through the centres for access to justice in the Bafatá, Bissau, Cacheu and Oio regions. The centres' legal staff continued to visit prisons and to assist the police in reviewing cases, including those of illegally detained prisoners, which led to several people being released. An additional centre was launched in the Quinara region on 5 December.

C. Mobilization, harmonization and coordination of international assistance

32. In its efforts to support national stakeholders in overcoming the political stalemate in Guinea-Bissau, UNIOGBIS held regular consultations with the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS and the European Union, as well as with members of the Security Council and bilateral partners represented in Bissau.

33. In close collaboration with international partners, the United Nations system provided technical and logistical support to the ECOWAS-led mediation efforts in September and October. With the support of the Peacebuilding Fund and with extrabudgetary funds from the Department of Political Affairs, UNIOGBIS provided technical, logistical and financial support to delegations dispatched by ECOWAS to Guinea-Bissau from 5 to 8 September, on 10 September and on 5 November, as well as for the organization of the round-table consultations facilitated by the ECOWAS Mediator in Conakry from 10 to 14 October. My Special Representative participated as an observer in those consultations.

34. In addition, the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau worked closely with key partners, including the African Development Bank, the European Union, the West

African Economic and Monetary Union and the World Bank, to ensure more coherent support for continuity of services and to tackle development challenges.

D. Strengthening democratic institutions and enhancing the capacity of State organs

35. The United Nations supported initiatives aimed at fostering open dialogue and promoting understanding of the state of democracy in Guinea-Bissau. In September and October, three conferences were organized by the National Institute of Studies and Research, with the support of UNIOGBIS, focusing on models of national political systems, national reconciliation processes in post-conflict contexts and the reform of political parties. Some 255 people, including 40 women, attended the conferences. On 23 September, UNIOGBIS assisted the National Assembly in the organization of a conference on the role of young people in building democracy.

36. On 10 November, UNIOGBIS launched an outreach campaign to promote the participation of citizens in democratic processes and in building a culture of democracy. As part of the campaign, four conferences, on political accountability, a stability pact, human rights and gender equality, were held at universities in Bissau between 10 November and 15 December and were broadcast on national television and radio. The conferences brought together 544 students, including 271 women. Public outreach meetings on constitutional rights were also held in all regions, except Bolama, between 5 and 21 December, by partner civil society organizations, with the support of UNIOGBIS regional offices.

37. UNIOGBIS continued to support initiatives that promoted the participation of women and young people in political dialogue. On 10 and 11 November and 29 and 30 December, UNIOGBIS supported the holding of regional meetings in Catió, Tombali region, and Bissau, with 67 representatives, including 38 women, of civil society organizations and authorities from the Quinara and Tombali regions, and the Biombo region and Bissau, respectively. Participants discussed dialogue between parliamentarians and communities, democratic culture among citizens and preparations for the national conference towards the consolidation of peace and development.

38. UNDP continued to provide support to specialized commissions of the National Assembly. From 3 to 6 November, it supported a visit by the Commission on Economic Affairs to State revenue collection institutions in the Quinara region to assess challenges in implementing their mandates. Between 16 and 23 November, it assisted the Commission for Women and Children to hold two workshops and a seminar in the Cacheu and Oio regions to disseminate the law against domestic violence. In partnership with the women's parliamentary caucus, the Commission for Women and Children held six debates in Bissau, on 23 and 24 November, with 80 women from civil society organizations to discuss the role of women in economic, social, political and cultural development.

39. From 22 to 26 November, as part of efforts to strengthen the capacity of public financial management oversight, the Court of Audit, supported by UNDP, organized a seminar for 53 finance and administration officials on accounting procedures and standards. The website of the Court, an important outreach tool to improve

accountability and transparency in public finance management, was launched during the seminar.

E. Law enforcement, criminal justice and penitentiary systems

40. UNIOGBIS continued to provide strategic and technical support to national law enforcement agencies to enhance their capacity. It developed a basic training programme for the country's police institutions and supported the creation of a career development centre to mitigate the effects of the absence of a police academy in Guinea-Bissau since 1992. UNIOGBIS also provided technical support to law enforcement agencies to develop internal security strategies and workplans.

41. To enhance coordination between police and internal security agencies, UNIOGBIS supported law enforcement agencies in replicating a national-level mechanism for strategic coordination, the Higher Council for Policing and Internal Security Coordination, at the regional level. On 23 October, the first regional-level mechanism held its inaugural meeting in Bafatá.

42. From 19 to 23 September, UNIOGBIS held a training workshop in Buba, Quinara region, for 16 officers from the Public Order Police and the National Guard to improve report-writing, coordination mechanisms and data and case management between police officers, prosecutors and courts.

43. From 30 October to 2 November, in collaboration with the Judiciary Police, UNIOGBIS held a training workshop on skills for organized crime investigations in its regional office in Bafatá for 15 officers, including 1 woman, from the Public Order Police and the National Guard. From 7 to 14 November, UNIOGBIS held a training workshop in Bissau on interviewing and interrogation techniques in complex investigations. In attendance were 24 officers, including 5 women, from the Public Order Police, the National Guard, the Judiciary Police, the Security Information Service and the Office of the Prosecutor General. From 28 November to 9 December in Bissau, UNIOGBIS also hosted a training-of-trainers course on conduct and discipline for 10 law enforcement officers, including 3 women, from the Public Order Police, the National Guard, the Judiciary Police, the Security Information Service and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

44. Between 28 November and 2 December, UNIOGBIS provided technical support to a working group comprising 10 officers, including 5 women, from the Public Order Police, the National Guard, the Judiciary Police, INTERPOL and the Office of the Prosecutor General to develop standard operating procedures for the collection of evidence and the effective documentation of the chain of custody.

F. Promotion and protection of human rights

45. UNIOGBIS continued to monitor trials and preliminary hearings at the regional courts in Bafatá, Bissau, Buba and Gabú. While due process is generally being respected, access to counsel remains limited. UNIOGBIS also continued to monitor prisons, detention centres and police cells in Bissau and the regions and to draw the attention of the authorities to the poor living conditions of prisoners and

delays in investigations. It also continued to raise awareness of and provide technical advice on human rights.

46. UNIOGBIS further undertook advocacy, reporting, capacity-building, awareness-raising and outreach activities for State institutions and civil society organizations, including traditional leaders, women and youth organizations and academic institutions.

47. To enhance the capacity of non-governmental organizations in terms of planning, project design and fundraising, UNIOGBIS facilitated training sessions for human rights advocates in Bafatá from 20 to 23 September, Bissau from 27 to 30 December, Cacheu from 27 to 30 September and Quinara from 29 November to 2 December. To date, the training has benefited 105 representatives, including 33 women, from national non-governmental organizations nationwide.

48. During a workshop organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of UNIOGBIS, from 14 to 17 November, national stakeholders agreed on the terms of reference of an interministerial committee on human rights to follow up on State obligations resulting from the ratification of international and regional human rights instruments. The Minister of Justice agreed to submit to the Cabinet a revised statute of the National Human Rights Commission, which would make it compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

49. On 16 November, Armed Forces Day, the Minister of Defence launched a human rights guide for the military at a ceremony in Bissau attended by the Secretary of State for Former Combatants, members of the National Assembly and all branches of the armed forces, as well as by representatives of the international community and civil society. The guide was produced by UNIOGBIS based on issues and best practices identified during training sessions held since 2011.

50. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) assisted the Government in the organization of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, as part of the larger campaign, through a series of public events. The activities included an official ceremony held in Tombali, one of the most remote regions, to celebrate the abandonment of the practice of female genital mutilation and early marriage in 10 local communities.

51. To support the Ministry of Justice in promoting a better understanding of human rights, UNIOGBIS produced a guide for civil society organizations to support them in dealing with human rights violations and enhancing awareness and knowledge of international, regional and national human rights protection mechanisms. A practical human rights guide to disseminate national, regional and international legal standards for persons deprived of their liberty was also produced by UNIOGBIS for the Ministry.

52. As part of the celebration of Human Rights Day, UNIOGBIS supported the holding of two public debates, on 6 and 8 December, in Bafatá and in Buba, Quinara region, to enhance dialogue between the local authorities and the public. Discussions during the debate held in Bafatá, attended by 50 participants, focused on female genital mutilation, discrimination, domestic violence, child exploitation, rape and other sexual abuse, impunity and high fees requested by the courts and the

police. The debate in Buba, which brought together some 300 participants, including public servants, traditional leaders and the Governor of Quinara, focused on lack of access to justice, gender-based violence, early and forced marriage, school dropout rates, access to health care, environmental conservation and the management of biodiversity and protected areas.

G. Combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

53. National institutions, with the support of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), continued their efforts to detect and report on drug trafficking and to seize illicit drugs. Investigations and joint operations conducted by the Judiciary Police and the Transnational Crime Unit indicate that trafficking continues to affect Guinea-Bissau as a transit country. Between August and December, the Judiciary Police and the Transnational Crime Unit arrested five individuals carrying drugs at the international airport, seizing 8.5 kg of cocaine.

54. UNIOGBIS and UNODC continued to provide technical, logistical and financial support to the Airport Communication Project, funded by the European Union and the United States, which helps in the strengthening of air borders and the interception of illicit flows of people and goods. In Guinea-Bissau, it is also supporting the operationalization, through mentoring and training, of an anti-trafficking unit at the international airport.

55. UNIOGBIS and UNODC provided technical, logistical and financial support to a capacity-building project implemented by Brazilian prosecutors. The project, funded by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, is focused on training public prosecutors in Guinea-Bissau on the handling of cases involving trafficking in drugs and persons, corruption, money-laundering, terrorism and environmental protection. The initiative consists of four sessions, each lasting three weeks, for groups of up to 30 trainees each. The first two sessions, held between 22 August and 25 November, benefited 54 prosecutors, including 13 women. The two remaining sessions are scheduled for the first semester of 2017.

56. Joint regional and international operations continue to be critical in tackling drug trafficking and organized crime in Guinea-Bissau and the subregion. Partnering with the German-funded capacity-building project to foster stability in West Africa, UNODC and UNIOGBIS provided planning and financial support to Operation Adwenpa II, implemented at select land borders and airports in participating countries from 14 to 21 November. The joint operation, which involved INTERPOL, the Transnational Crime Unit, the Judiciary Police, the Directorate-General for Migration and Borders, the Security Information Service and the Fiscal Brigade, enabled participants to use skills acquired during training conducted by UNODC and INTERPOL on joint operations.

II. Incorporating a gender perspective into peacebuilding

57. The United Nations continued to work with national stakeholders to enhance the overall participation of women in national affairs, conflict mediation and the strengthening of protection mechanisms. UN-Women, in collaboration with the

United Nations Population Fund, assisted the Ministry of Women, the Family and Social Cohesion and the Institute for Women and Children in reviewing the national gender policy and formulating an action plan for its implementation. UN-Women also supported the Ministry in the formulation of a national family policy to reduce gender-based inequalities in households.

58. From 27 to 29 September, UNIOGBIS organized a training-of-trainers workshop aimed at enhancing the capacity of 15 National Guard officers, including 6 women, to respond to sexual and gender-based violence. It also partnered with the United Nations Volunteers programme to facilitate training for 16 Volunteers and nine representatives of youth organizations aimed at enhancing gender mainstreaming skills and gender-focused programme management.

59. On 4 November, with the financial support of UN-Women, three government officials and three representatives of UN-Women undertook a study visit to Ziguinchor, Senegal, to learn from the experience of a neighbourhood association that implemented a community-based project to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence. This exercise envisages a future, partner-supported replication of a centre with similar functions in Guinea-Bissau.

60. On 5 December, the Government, with the support of UNIOGBIS, launched a women's mediation network as part of efforts to promote the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution. UNIOGBIS had previously supported the preparations for the launch through training and capacity-building for 145 mediators (121 women and 24 men) and through monitoring and assistance.

I. Work with the Peacebuilding Commission

61. The Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission remained actively engaged in following the situation in Guinea-Bissau. On 19 September, it issued a communiqué in which it welcomed the ECOWAS-brokered six-point road map and reiterated its support for the efforts by ECOWAS to implement it.

62. In recognition of the need to address the gap in bottom-up peacebuilding initiatives, the Peacebuilding Fund facilitated the development of a project aimed at empowering women and young people to participate more effectively in political life. This, coupled with the overall implementation of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan for 2015-2017, was supported by the Fund secretariat based in Guinea-Bissau.

IV. Cross-cutting issues

A. Integration of the United Nations system

63. Under the leadership of my Special Representative, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team have continued to work with the national authorities to make the Guinea-Bissau-United Nations Partnership Framework operational in line with national priorities. To ensure coherent system-wide support for national priorities in the rule of law area, UNIOGBIS, UNDP, UNODC, the United Nations Children's Fund and UN-Women made progress towards the finalization of a joint programme

on police, corrections and justice reform under the umbrella of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict and Other Crisis Situations.

64. On 18 and 19 October, a two-day retreat of the Senior Policy Group of the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau brought together senior leaders from UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team to review the Organization's strategies and priorities in the country. The review was undertaken in the light of the political crisis and the pending implementation of the ECOWAS road map and the Conakry Agreement. The outcomes will be used to ensure that the United Nations system is leveraged to contribute to peacebuilding and stabilization efforts, including supporting the continuity of access to basic services.

B. Public information

65. UNIOGBIS continued to monitor the national and international press and to disseminate information, in English and Portuguese, on the good offices of my Special Representative, the implementation of the Partnership Framework and the mandated activities of the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau. This included the dissemination of more than 160 press releases, articles and posts on social media and the website of UNIOGBIS, in addition to the distribution of 2,000 copies of a magazine on the activities of the United Nations system. UNIOGBIS also produced 22 radio programmes broadcast by private radio stations with national coverage and 27 community radio stations throughout the country. In line with mandated activities, programmatic themes included democracy, citizenship, the political participation of young people and women, models of government and political systems, political dialogue, reconciliation, the mediation agreements reached in Bissau and Conakry, the Sustainable Development Goals and violence against women.

66. Between 12 and 14 October, UNIOGBIS organized a media forum attended by 103 media executives and senior journalists to discuss the management of media companies and journalistic ethics and to assist the Ministry of Social Communication in the design of a national media policy. Similarly, UNIOGBIS and the National Council for Social Communication co-organized, on 21 and 22 December, a workshop with 50 journalists, including 10 women, to draft an ethics code for journalists, as provided for in the relevant media legislation.

C. Staff safety and security

67. No major security incidents affecting United Nations personnel were reported, notwithstanding an increase in violent crime, which included cases of assault and armed robbery in Bissau and in the regions of Bafatá and Gabú.

V. Findings and recommendations of the strategic review mission

68. In response to a request by my Special Representative to determine whether UNIOGBIS was fit for purpose, a mission led by the Department of Political Affairs was deployed to Guinea-Bissau from 4 to 14 December to conduct a strategic review of the key priorities of UNIOGBIS, make recommendations on its operational posture and identify possible elements for an exit strategy. The mission was also composed of representatives of the Department of Field Support, the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNDP and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

69. The strategic review mission met the national authorities, including the President, the Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence. Meetings were also held with representatives of political parties and civil society and with international partners represented in Guinea-Bissau. The mission visited the UNIOGBIS regional office in Buba to assess engagement outside Bissau. It also held in-depth consultations with relevant components within UNIOGBIS and with the United Nations country team.

70. The strategic review mission noted that many national and international stakeholders expected the United Nations, jointly with ECOWAS, to increase pressure on the key political actors to ensure the swift implementation of the ECOWAS road map and the Conakry Agreement. Meetings with the various national stakeholders confirmed the continued relevance of the road map as the most pragmatic way of overcoming the political impasse and taking key reforms forward. The mission noted the potential for relapse into instability and the continued validity of the drivers identified in the strategic assessment mission of November 2014 (see S/2015/37), dispatched pursuant to Security Council resolution 2157 (2014).

71. The strategic review mission found that UNIOGBIS should sequence its engagement and, in the immediate term, focus on the issues spelled out in the ECOWAS road map. As a priority, attention should be given to maximizing its good offices, political facilitation and coordinating the efforts of international partners. In the immediate to short term, independent of whether a consensual Government was formed, the Mission should focus its political efforts on supporting a timely electoral process for legislative and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019. It should further explore ways to support crucial reform projects in the lead-up to the elections, in particular constitutional review and reform, security sector reform and reforms of the Electoral Code and the legislation on political parties.

72. The strategic review mission also underscored the need for UNIOGBIS to support the implementation of reforms to promote the rule of law and human rights. Such support should be geared towards building the foundations of State institutions and democratic governance, given that viable and functioning State institutions are considered to be of paramount importance for the promotion and protection of human rights. A national reconciliation process to address impunity for past human

rights violations and the sustainable enhancement of State capacities must also remain key areas of United Nations support.

73. To achieve progress in meeting these priorities and corresponding benchmarks, the strategic review mission recommended that UNIOGBIS should enhance its operational posture. In particular, it should strengthen its political capacities so as to provide my Special Representative with enhanced analytical and operational support, including in the areas of good offices, mediation and constitutional, electoral and security sector reform. Moreover, the UNIOGBIS human rights and public information units should be fully leveraged in direct support of the political mandate. Strategic sequencing, in particular of programmatic activities that are not sustainable in the current situation, should free up resources to support a stronger presence of UNIOGBIS in the regions, including for enhanced monitoring, early warning, decentralized capacity-building and community outreach.

74. The strategic review mission suggested that UNIOGBIS priorities should further be supported by a streamlined management structure, whereby the political office would be strengthened and report directly to my Special Representative, while the heart of the programmatic work, in particular on the rule of law and security institutions, would be led by a single deputy special representative for rule of law and deputy head of mission, who would also serve as United Nations Resident Coordinator. Such an arrangement would also serve to foster greater integration between UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team and prepare for the eventual exit of UNIOGBIS.

75. The strategic review mission proposed possible benchmarks for the exit of UNIOGBIS. The overarching benchmark for the coming three years should be to accompany the public in reaching agreement on and implementing key reforms towards successful elections and a stabilized post-electoral period. The mission recommended that, if, by the end of the current legislative and presidential terms, no significant progress had been made in achieving key short-term priorities for UNIOGBIS, the Security Council should reconsider options for the future role of UNIOGBIS.

VI. Observations

76. I am deeply concerned by the protracted political crisis in Guinea-Bissau and its negative impact on the country's stability and socioeconomic development. The lack of progress in identifying and implementing a sustainable solution is having a detrimental effect on national efforts to tackle long-standing and emerging challenges to peace, security, development and human rights and to move forward with a viable peacebuilding agenda.

77. Political stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau must move away from their intransigent positions that serve only to perpetuate divisions. I urge all political actors to put the interests of the people above all other considerations. I call upon them to engage in genuine dialogue and find common ground to urgently resolve the political crisis.

78. The Government has benefited from the unwavering support and goodwill of its regional and international partners. The six-point road map of 10 September and

the Conakry Agreement of 14 October, brokered by ECOWAS and supported by the United Nations and other international partners, offer a historic opportunity for the national authorities and political leaders, together with civil society, to jointly ensure political stability and build sustainable peace.

79. The United Nations remains determined to support Guinea-Bissau in achieving progress on key reforms, as outlined in the Conakry Agreement, aimed at creating a conducive environment for the holding of legislative and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019, the reform of the Electoral Code and the promulgation of a new law on political parties that would enhance the parties' autonomy and internal democracy. These reforms would be the first step towards the creation of an enabling environment for further national reconciliation.

80. I am encouraged by the commitment demonstrated by the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government at its fiftieth ordinary session, on 17 December, to supporting the implementation of the ECOWAS road map and the Conakry Agreement. I join ECOWAS in urging the President and all the signatories to the agreements to commit themselves to fully implementing them.

81. I commend the Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority and President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau and President of Guinea, Alpha Condé, and the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma, for their efforts in support of Guinea-Bissau. I take note of the decision of the Authority to withdraw ECOMIB by 30 June 2017. UNIOGBIS will work with all national, regional and international partners to ensure that the withdrawal does not create a vacuum that could lead to instability.

82. I welcome the sustained engagement of all international partners present in the country, in particular the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS and the European Union. I encourage them to continue to support the country's national strategic and operational plan for the period 2015-2020 and to make good on the commitments made during the round-table dialogue held in Brussels in March 2015. I welcome the resumption of the IMF programme of disbursements and encourage international partners to support their development programmes where they remain feasible and sustainable, in particular with a view to supporting the provision of basic public services to the population, creating greater economic opportunities, including for young people, and building the capacity of civil society organizations and local authorities.

83. The challenges posed by transnational organized crime and other emerging threats, including the risk of other complex security challenges in West Africa spilling over, continue to present genuine threats to stability. I call upon national, regional and international partners to coordinate action to prevent and put an end to the corrosive and destabilizing effects of transnational crime.

84. I am encouraged that, throughout the political crisis, the armed forces and security institutions have refrained from interfering in the political arena. The formation of a fully functioning Government that conforms to the letter and spirit of the Conakry Agreement, supported by the National Assembly, is indispensable to making sustainable progress in the modernization of the armed forces and the effective implementation of national security sector reform plans with the support of international partners.

85. I strongly encourage donors to support the joint programme on police, justice and corrections, developed by UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team on the basis of national priority plans. International donors could also leverage the joint programme as a platform for coordinating their assistance.

86. I welcome the progress made towards the establishment of an interministerial committee on human rights to follow up on State obligations resulting from the ratification of human rights instruments. I commend the Ministry of Education on its decision to formally introduce human rights into the curricula, produce a manual for teachers and train teachers on human rights. I also welcome the launch of a human rights guide for the armed forces and encourage the military leaders to fully comply with its principles.

87. Building on this progress, I urge the national authorities to finalize the ratification of pending international human rights instruments and reiterate my calls for the implementation of the recommendations of human rights mechanisms, including those of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review in 2015, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in 2014 and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers in 2015.

88. The mandate of UNIOGBIS expires on 28 February 2017. As Guinea-Bissau continues to seek a pathway towards sustainable peace, the urgent need for the United Nations to make a political difference is evident. In this regard, I endorse the recommendations of the strategic review mission outlined above. The United Nations needs the operational flexibility to respond effectively to the challenges of the political stalemate, while also focusing on its primary mandate of preventing conflict and sustaining long-term peace. In this regard, UNIOGBIS will need to strengthen its political capacities and strategically sequence its mandated activities to focus on creating the political space needed for sustainable peacebuilding. A streamlined management structure will also help in enhancing integration within the United Nations system in Guinea-Bissau. Furthermore, I recommend that the mandate of UNIOGBIS be extended for another year, until 28 February 2018.

89. I express my appreciation to the staff of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team under the leadership of my Special Representative, Modibo Ibrahim Touré, for their commitment, endurance and hard work, as well as to bilateral, regional and international partners for their continuing contributions to peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.



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**Letter dated 3 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of
Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

Upon the instructions of my Government, I am transmitting for your attention the press release of the Ministry of Defence of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, dated 1 February 2017, on the subversive infiltration attempt by the armed forces of Azerbaijan in the northern direction (Talish) of the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan (see annex).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Zohrab Mnatsakanyan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-02078 (E) 150217



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Annex to the letter dated 3 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[1 February 2017]

On 1 February, at about 3 p.m., the Azerbaijani armed forces, taking advantage of the foggy weather conditions, made a subversive reconnaissance infiltration attempt in the northern direction (Talish) of the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan. The Defence Army of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic vanguard units, promptly revealing the advance of the Azerbaijani special forces, took preventive action and threw them back, causing casualties. As a result of the organized counter-subversive operation, the NKR Defence Army vanguard units took captive a soldier of the Azerbaijani Army, Elnur Husseynzade, born in 1995 in Barda town. According to reliable data, at least one serviceman from the Azerbaijani side was wounded, a fact that was also affirmed by the Azerbaijani Defence Ministry's press release today.

The NKR Defence Army vanguard units continue to confidently carry out their military duties along the entire line of contact and are ready to neutralize any attack.
